THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINGH): (a) to (c) Although there may be some apprehensions regarding the impact of economic reforms on the different sectors of the economy, these do not appear to be well-founded on factual evidence. The economic reforms initiated in the last few years have had a favourable impact in terms of acceleration in overall growth of the economy, build up of a comfortable foreign exchange reserve position, lower rate of inflation and substantial flow of foreign capital. However, despite these achievements, the challenge to overcome the deep-seated problem of poverty remains a daunting one and the government recognises that our reforms must be guided by campassion and justice. The Budget for 2000-2001 has proposed to put the economy on a sustained, equitable and job creating growth path of 7 to 8 per cent per year in order to banish poverty within a decade and has accorded highest priority to strengthening the rural economy and to human resource development to achieve this objective.

Study on Corporatisation of Ports

*179. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the ports suitable for corporatisation as revealed on a study conducted by Cornell Consultants;

(b) the reaction of Government thereto; and

(c) the port which will be first corporatised and by when?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJNATH SINGH): (a) and (b) The Cornell Group appointed by the Asian Development Bank, is yet to submit its Final Report.

(c) A decision has been taken to corporatise the Major Ports in a phased manner starting with the new Port at Ennore and followed by Jawaharlal Nehru and Haldia Ports. No time frame has been fixed for completion of the process.

Storage of rain water

†*180. SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA:
SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the requirement of water in the country can be fulfilled by the utilization of rain water by storing it;

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†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

(b) whether Government have assessed the capacity regarding storage of rain water;

(c) if so, what is the capacity; and

(d) the schemes formulated by Government to utilise the capacity?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (DR. C.R THAKUR): (a) to (d) India receives a rainfall of about 4000 billion cu.m. every year. Out of this about 1869 billion cu. m. appears as runoff in the various rivers of the country. The replenishable Ground Water is around 432 billion cu.m. The requirement of the country, upto 2025 AD can be met through optimal utilisation of these renewable water resources.

The utilisable runoff by conventional methods has been assessed as 690 Billion Cubic Metre (BCM). A live storage capacity of 176.73 BCM has been created by construction of large dams & medium projects upto 1995 including about 3 BCM capacity created by medium & small dams. Projects to add an additional capacity of about 75.42 BCM are under construction and 132.32 BCM are under planning.

Government of India is also promoting Rain Water Harvesting through Watershed Management Programme, Artificial Recharge of Ground Water and roof-top rain water harvesting under the Sector Reform Project of Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme under the Ministry of Rural Development for which technical and financial assistance is provided to the State Government and other implementing agencies. Central Ground Water Board has also taken up pilot studies for artificial ground water recharge. The rooftop rain water harvestiang structures are quite large in number and are mostly at individual level and, therefore it is difficult to assess their storage capacity. Its contribution towards storage can only be marginal in comparison to the storage through conventional methods.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Marketing Tie up Between Air India and Virgin Atlantic

1204. SHRI CM. IBRAHIM: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Air India has finalised any marketing tie up with Virgin Atlantic for flights between Indian origin and London and New York;